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BLUE BEADS AND AMBER



MARY VIRGINIA HARRISS
ÆTAT IX

Blue Beads and Amber

A Child's Book of Verses

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MARY VIRGINIA HARRISS

With an introduction by

WILLIAM KAVANAUGH DOTY



BALTIMORE

THE NORMAN, REMINGTON CO.

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To
MY MOTHER

This Book is Affectionately Dedicated

INTRODUCTION

I.

During the last five years a considerable interest has attached to those unusual and interesting children whom the public prints have been pleased to style child prodigies. Many of these have been noticed in both Europe and America—some as authors, some as musicians, and others as precocious students, athletes, mathematicians, and experts in games of skill. Almost invariably they have been dismissed with a brief word as a tendency of the times—symptoms of a modern age that is no less productive of paradoxes than eager to end the old order. This attitude, however, is a mistaken one. These clever children may be symptoms, expressions, departures, arrivals, or whatever else the superficially minded may choose to call them: indeed, they are an expression of the modern attitude; but the responsibility for their coming upon the stage has, strangely enough, been misplaced by the critics. The

INTRODUCTION

source of the change, so called, this shifting of the shoe in this peculiarly upsetting age, is not to be sought in the children themselves, but rather in the grown-up people responsible for them.

Modern psychology has rendered no service more significant than its investigation and interpretation of the child, his mind, body, and spirit. It has recognised and demonstrated that the child is, in truth, the father of the man. It has shown that child psychology is a valuable study, not alone for the light that is shed upon man at maturity, but also for the possibilities that have been revealed for the shaping and directing of the human life, while yet in its plastic state, for a wider future activity. By suppression and inhibition on the one hand, and by stimulation and encouragement on the other, it has been found possible to shape character not only, but also to develop personality and to increase the efficacy and quality of the natural tendencies by means of training and environment, which count for much as auxiliaries in the unfolding of heredity.

INTRODUCTION

Thus the child of to-day has had a more encouraging environment than the child of yesterday. He may now be heard as well as seen; and even though he has in some instances made too much of his new freedom, he may be excused, in some measure, for overstepping the bounds that have hedged him during so long a period of repression.

Childhood is not the happy, care-free time that poets and other romanticists have pictured it. There are problems, longings, hopes, and disappointments then no whit less poignant than those of the after years. Perhaps they are yet more keen than the subsequent sensations. Certainly the childish ability to compensate losses and to realise desires is less. Experience has not yet given that intellectual training that serves as a balance wheel for the instincts and emotions; and, as a result, they hold dominion untempered and unrestrained. This truth older people are beginning to realise, and children now, probably more than ever before, are being allowed an outlet through a varied expression of the teeming sensations of their mental and spiritual life. There is a sympathy, an understanding, in

INTRODUCTION

these days that allows and even encourages such expression; and through it a flood of light has been thrown directly upon the psychology of children and indirectly upon that of the race.

It has thrown light upon the psychology of the race because the study of childhood in its spiritual, mental, and physical aspects has an illuminating bearing upon the general problems of the human mind and its development. The principle of recapitulation—the theory that each individual retraces, though it be never so crudely, the steps in the evolution of the species—has its chief evidence in the carefully scrutinised development of the child. This development, as observation would seem to prove, is influenced more largely by heredity than by environment. Special excellencies, particularly those highly specialised forms of mental activity which seek expression in such activities as literature, music, and mathematics, are hereditary, and therefore innate. They are nothing other than inherited peculiarities, and are the result of inherited mental structures. The development of the child is, for that reason, but an

INTRODUCTION

evolutionary unfolding of the latent potencies, possibilities, innate in the child himself from his inheritance; and the problem of training, education in its wider sense, is the problem of recognising the native tendencies of the mind, and of perfecting and refining them by stimulation, direction, and restraint, exercised in a scientific and sympathetic manner. Environment thus may play its part—an important and indispensable part—but it is not the fundamental thing that inheritance is. It may colour and temper and strengthen, and so is worthy of the deepest consideration; but, in any case, it is but an auxiliary in the evolutionary process, whereby the actual individual is discovered and matured.

The purpose of education, its true function, then, is here introduced. It is important to discover just what the natural, the innate, tendencies are, what their normal course of development should be, and then by wise and patient direction and control to encourage the process of their spontaneous development by drawing out whatever excellences may be present from the long heritage of the years. It is important also to augment inherited

INTRODUCTION

tendencies in order to secure a maximum of growth that will insure a breadth along with a depth. And it is equally important in this connection to remember (as the new pedagogy does not) that a wholesome mental discipline, not too mildly exercised, is indispensable to good training. Encouraging natural tendencies is not to be confused with taking the path of least resistance, if a well-rounded personality, capable of the necessary conformity amidst the complexities of modern society, is to be achieved.

There would seem to be scarcely any limits to the possibilities attaching to a mentality and a personality such as those of Mary Harriss. The study of childhood is yet but a child itself, however, just at the dawning of the scientific understanding of child training; and the subtle touch, whereby the nice distinction in determining just where and when the stress for or against tendencies is to be laid, has not yet been acquired.

The new attitude has revealed many young persons who have been listed as marvels for reason of some peculiar excellence. Amongst juvenile authors has the movement been espe-

INTRODUCTION

cially pronounced. Since 1918 a dozen volumes, at least, have appeared from the pens of child authors. Perhaps there are many more, if a complete record were had.

Literary expression by children is by no means new, but it may well be doubted that any period has witnessed the publication of half so many books by these precocious *artists* as that between 1918 and 1923. Of all juvenile authors, Marjorie Fleming, born on the Firth of Forth in 1803, is the classic example. If others since her day had been favoured by the good fortune of a biographer with the sympathetic soul of Dr. John Brown, it is more than possible that this branch of literature would possess many more excellent specimens of the perfervid genius of childhood.

Now appears this little book of verse by Mary Virginia Harriss. It is made up of verses written when she was four, nine, ten, and eleven years of age, and is an interesting contribution by a child to American literature, besides being a valuable psychological contribution to the study of child life.

INTRODUCTION

II.

Mary Virginia Harriss is undoubtedly an interesting person, despite the brief toll of her years, and something by way of recounting her activities and describing per personality can not be considered as coming amiss in this connection.

She was born 20 October, 1911, at Saint Louis, Missouri, the younger of two children of John William and Virginia (Powell) Harriss. In her veins is a mingled strain of blood; but she is sprung, for the most part, from British ancestry, chiefly English and Scottish. Her father's ancestors, of English and Scotch-Irish origin, were early colonists of Virginia and Carolina, and were among the first settlers of Western Tennessee. On the part of her mother, her ancestors were English, with a strain of Scotch-Irish, who came to America from the northern part of England, settled in Virginia, and thence removed to Kentucky.

Although born at Saint Louis, where she spent the first five years of her life, and although she has resided since at Chicago, Saint Louis, and Baltimore, Mary Harriss has been reared amid the influences of the South-

INTRODUCTION

ern tradition of cultivation and idealism. The customs, manners, and ideals of the South have been the dominant forces of her environment. Among her antecedents have been those who were gifted in music, oratory, and authorship—people with a facile touch, with imagination, and with magnetic qualities. This inheritance explains sufficiently her striking gift of expression, just as her environment explains her gentle bearing and sweet tempered attitudes.

Mary Harriss is a sweet looking child, not less than an interesting and intelligent one. If she is less than beautiful, she is more than pretty. Her slim graceful body is almost boyish in its slender strength and straightness. She has a mass of thick bobbed golden hair, fine dreamy blue eyes, and a large, well-shaped mouth. With her white skin, her pale pointed fingers, and her fragile strength, she presents a picture that is rarely excelled. Marjorie Fleming might have written of her, and not of her own “dear Love Isabella”,

*Her skin is soft, her face is fair,
And she has very pretty hair . . .
Her nails are neat, her teeth are white,
Her eyes are very, very bright;
In a conspicuous town she lives,
And to the poor her money gives.*

INTRODUCTION

In manner she is almost timid, giving at first the impression of shyness; but this is soon dissipated upon better acquaintance. She is vibrant with feeling, enthusiastic, and sentient with young life. Her curiosity extends to all things of interest to an acquisitive mind, and an enquiring activity leads her far afield in the waking hours of each day.

The interests and undertakings of her life have been many, but she has not allowed anything to interfere with an excellent record at school. Her first experiences in the school-room were had at Saint Louis, where she entered kindergarten at the age of five. She attended school at Chicago also, and later at Baltimore, where she has completed the sixth grade. Her reports are always above reproach, usually admirable. In addition, she has studied French under a private tutor and has taken a course in eurythmics at the Peabody Institute, of Baltimore.

Her poetic turn manifested itself at an early age. The first of her verses, composed at the age of four years, became a part of the family tradition, and so were preserved. Unfortunately no effort was made

INTRODUCTION

to remember and record others, doubtless of equal worth. It was not until the young poet was nine years old and could write her own compositions that the process of verse creation was renewed. She cared little for the study of music, and promised her mother that, if not compelled to take lessons in music, she would write instead. The offer was accepted and the contract made. Shortly afterwards at school her teacher assigned as an exercise in English the composition of a poem, to be written in fifteen minutes, and gave a choice of two subjects, *Sunrise* and *Sunset*. Mary Harriss chose the second and wrote the verses by that title. The teacher asked if she had written them, called in the principal for his approval, and told Mary Virginia that she should take them home to her mother. Thus a career was definitely launched. It has continued without interruption up to now; but as the young lady has resolved to be a naturalist, in order to write of the wonders and beauties of the natural sphere, it is possible that the world will lose an Elizabeth Barrett to gain a Mme. Curie.

Science, as yet, has not limited her atten-

INTRODUCTION

tion and sympathy. One of her most lasting interests has been in dramatics. As a member of The Little Players, of Baltimore, she has taken prominent rôles in various plays, as, for instance, the part of Sir Mortimer in *Shadow Plays*; that of Hans in *The Pied Piper*; and the more ambitious rôle of Androcles, the mock-heroic little tailor, in George Bernard Shaw's play, *Androcles and the Lion*. It seems to be her gift to interpret the character of her parts with more than childish ability; to enter into the spirit, the humour, of the particular part, bringing our subtle touches of pathos, bathos, comedy, or tragedy, as the need may be. Just now she is going further into dramatic technique by constructing and operating a little theatre of her own.

Strangely enough, she has never cared for dolls, or for any of those petty trifles and gewgaws that are supposed to be the especial delight of the feminine mind and taste. "I am afraid I do not care much for clothes," she once remarked, "and I do not believe that I ever shall." She likes much better the sports, toys, and pastimes of boys than those of girls; things that move and have being,

INTRODUCTION

and games of action, please her most. Country is preferable to city in her way of thinking, and the great out-of-doors with birds, flowers, trees, animals, the ocean, boats, skating, fishing, swimming,—these are the things that she loves best. She once said that if she were allowed to pick seven things of all others, books excepted, that she would prefer for her own amusement, she would choose a pony, a dog, a bicycle, a boat, a scutter car, a kite, and a goat. Strange companions these for a child of such exquisite taste and refined feeling, of such gift for the facile expression of the influence of the beautiful.

A passion for freedom, however, would explain these tastes. Freedom with Mary Harriss is almost a fetish—freedom of thought, freedom of action, freedom of spirit. The conventions of society she believes in many instances to be senseless and superficial; and many of the ills of modern life, not less than many of the blessings, are, in her estimation, traceable to *civilisation*: but with it all, she is constructive in her criticism, always conscious of the rights of others in believing and acting as they choose.

INTRODUCTION

Books, as might not be supposed from the preferences listed previously, are a special delight to Mary Harriss, probably her chief delight. She is omnivorous in her reading. Books of all sorts and sizes come in for her critical estimate and enjoyment. Fairy tales, poetry, and adventure stories would very likely stand first in her lists, although she reads many others. Kipling, Mark Twain, Lewis Carroll, Lowell, Browning, Hans Andersen, the Brothers Grimm, Andrew Lang, and Shakespeare come first in her choice. The *Just So Stories* and *The Jungle Book*, one and two, she would select from Kipling; of Mark Twain's works, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, naturally enough, are favourites, but her liking for *A Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur* is less to be expected, and even less than that, *The Mysterious Stranger*, which is one of her best liked books. She would make little distinction between Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking-glass*, and *The Hunting of the Snark*. She likes them all. And she likes all poetry—the sentimental love poetry less than any—and all fairy tales.

INTRODUCTION

All of the fairy tales of Andersen, of the Brothers Grimm, and all of those in the *coloured* fairy books of Andrew Lang, not to mention several minor collections, have been read once, and often reread. Lowell's *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, and Browning's *The Pied Piper* are first in favour among numerous poems, and *Romeo and Juliet* is somewhat liked, despite its romantic love scenes. Stevenson's stories, in especial *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, form an indispensable part of this critical young lady's library. When she is not roaming lawns, climbing trees, or directing her tiny playhouse, it is safe to seek her in some cosy chair or cuddled in some pleasant corner, where, either as an interested spectator or as an invisible participator, she enters through her books the magic realm of gold to join the colourful heroes and heroines of other times and climes, who know both trials and triumphs and have moods both grave and gay.

No wonder her observations are so swift and sure, with an experience so varied through the lives of the characters in her beloved books. Through their eyes she has

INTRODUCTION

seen many lands; through their feelings she has had a varied emotional experience; and by their aid she can well view her own world with more than the eyes of a child. Through them also has come a mastery of her own language that is quite extensive for one so young; and her many moods find expression, ample and clear, in her practical and æsthetic vocabulary, stored up in the genial companionship of her books.

The wild love of freedom, which in many of her verses has found expression,—freedom from convention, from school, from life in cities, from hypocrisies, and from other rules attributed to a conspiring *civilisation*, not omitting skirts and bathing suits, so utterly worthless and annoying—might long since have assumed a tragic significance but for her sense of humour, sense of justice, and recognition of expediency. These possessions have lifted her over many's the vexing problem. Some things simply must be because they must, and people are funny, anyway. This humour of hers is ever lurking in the background, to be revealed in flashes at times the least expected. To the solemn question,

INTRODUCTION

“Do you ever read Shakespeare?” her ready reply came with a twinkle in the eye: “Oh, yes. As Mr. Jiggs said to Mr. De Jected, ‘I read Shakespeare’s works as fast as they are published.’” What a question to propound to a well-read young lady of the sixth grade! The answer would have checked a less persistent admirer. The humour of situation, quite as much as the humour of word and phrase, attracts her. Many a funny story is garnered from the events of each day, to be remembered and recounted later with irresistible zest.

All things and animals have souls where Mary Harriss is concerned. Her communion with Nature is full and intimate. She is not dependent upon human beings for companionship. Not at all. Trees and dogs will do quite as well. In fact, she has few illusions left about people. Human nature she can read in a way almost uncanny for a child. But with it all, she is yet a child; and, strange to say, she wishes to remain one for ever. There is the feeling, perhaps, though unexpressed even to herself, that now is the happy season, free of too much responsibility

INTRODUCTION

and full of care-free existence in overalls atop the trees, or in a bathing suit on the sandy beaches of the Bay. Wordsworth might have meant her when he wrote:

*Loving she is, and tractable, though wild;
And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play. . . .
. . . this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs. . . .*

III

The verses in *Blue Beads and Amber* need little analytical comment. They are their own best introduction, and clearly speak for themselves. But it will do no harm to point out their distinctive qualities, thus emphasising their pronounced modernity and intense mode.

The vast problems arising from the theories of metre and verse are too extensive and complicated for discussion here. They have not

INTRODUCTION

concerned Mary Harriss, and they need not concern an introduction to her verse. She is a poet rather than a mechanical creator of accurate and rigid verse forms. She instinctively achieves the effects and results of her verses through *feeling* more than through conscious effort, although her manuscripts with much elimination and interlining show that, like all true poets, she can pick and choose with discretion. With much justification, she might be classed as a modern primitive. Her verses are distinctly written in the new mode. Her manner for that very reason enables her to touch hands with the ancients in the spirit of friendly understanding. The King James Version of the Bible and translations from the Chinese are suggested by her simple and direct expression. Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of these poems is their attainment largely of the modern ideal of the New Poetry by a natural process of expression in which self-consciousness is at the minimum and spontaneity at the maximum. They are, in a sense, unconscious, therefore instinctive. Mary Harriss resembles, in so far as a child may, the

INTRODUCTION

new poets in the attained result; but she differs from them widely in the method. Her literary kinship with Eunice Tietjens, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Amy Lowell, Marjorie Seiffert, Aline Kilmer, and others of the modern school is the kinship of temper and tone achieved, not of method and means of achievement. She may arrive at much the same goal, achieve much the same effect; but by what different ways! Her product is that of a naïve sophistication; theirs of a sophisticated naïveté. Hers is the bird's song; theirs the meditated melody.

These verses in the new mode have, as real poems of the new mode must, a freedom from artificiality. They are direct, simple, and unaffected. They have, moreover, as not all verses of the new mode do, the desirable virtues of the trinity of form, proportion, and emotional idea. The possession of these qualities, according to Sir Rabindranath Tagore, is the true test of true poetry.

In verse form they differ. *Vers libre* comes in for its share of attention, but the more formal specimens of verse in metre and rime are not excluded. There is no inconsistency in

INTRODUCTION

this: many writers of the New Poetry retain both rime and metre; and the spirit of the movement may still be retained, not because of them, but in spite of them. Those things placed in the discard are the affectations—*inversion, transposition, irrelevant and high sounding allusions, stilted diction, shifts and contractions of language, and the innumerable other rhetorical pomposities and excesses.* Simplicity and sincerity are the keynotes of the New Poetry, if its champions are to be believed, and these qualities Mary Harriss has put into her verses. Her diction is that of a child, and hence is unstereotyped; it is the diction of a child, and so is intensive rather than extensive; it is the diction of a child, and is, consequently, contemporary instead of archaic. When rime is used, it is used not slavishly, but temporarily. It is also unstereotyped, and suggests in kind, if not in degree, the new freedom inaugurated by Shelley and Keats and Poe.

Whether Walt Whitman were or were not the father of the modern school of poetry, he had all of its faults and few of its virtues. His senseless jargon and meaningless ejacu-

INTRODUCTION

lations rarely rise to the heights of poetry; but he will be remembered for having done much to break the too rigid shackles by a revolution that amounted to anarchy. He helped to make poetry objective rather than subjective; to give to it concreteness of object and environment rather than the old abstractions of introspection and allusion. This the New Poetry does; this the poetry of Mary Harriss does: and she is stamped by it as a thorough-going modern and an out-and-out primitive. Her naturalness is *natural*. It places her among the moderns, therefore, in the effect, but it unites her as well with the primitives in the means.

An idea of Oriental verse has been given recently by several volumes of picturesque translations of Chinese poetry, notably those by Arthur Waley, Amy Lowell, and Shigeyoshi Obata. The New Poetry is responsible for their appearance in English, and has been tremendously influenced by their appearance in return. It is interesting to see how great the resemblance in form and method is between many of the translations from the Chinese and the poems in *Blue Beads and*

INTRODUCTION

Amber. This striking similarity is particularly evident from a comparison of such selections as *Looking at the Moon after Rain*, *The Heaven's Gate Mountains*, and *Word-Pattern* by Li T'ai-Po, *On Seeing a Distant View of Chung-Nan Mountain* by Po Chu-i, *Flowers and Moonlight on the Spring River* by Yang-ti, *Boating in Autumn* by Lu Yu, and *The Waters of Lung-T'au* by Hsu Ling and those poems by Mary Harriss called *Sky Pictures*, *Sunrise*, *Butterflies*, *The Orchard*, and *Autumn Leaves*. Each contains the intensive singleness of idea, the concreteness of object and environment, and the directness of language and form that go to give to modern poetry whatever distinction it may possess.

The proportion of these poems is another point of excellence. It matters not if the purpose be merely to paint a picture, to reveal a situation, or to convey an emotional idea; there is generally that tendency toward proportion. In *The Making of Our Clothes*, *If I Had My Way*, *The Doll without a Name*, *Wild Horses*, *Spring*, and *The Ocean Waves* is indicated that nice feeling for proportion.

INTRODUCTION

Totality of effect is obtained both by simplicity of structure and the absence of the superfluous word. In some instances there is only the one division, setting forth the one idea; in most there is a dual form, the first half laying the way for the second; in some, as in *The Making of Our Clothes*, there are three divisions; in others there are more: all, however, are closely related, and have a unity of purpose, idea, and mood.

Even more skillful is the attainment of the emotional idea in these verses. Mary Harriss is a-tingle with sentiment, and this trait, coupled with her keen observation, enables her to impute the proper feeling in most instances and to estimate the emotional value inherent in things, situations, and ideas. In some she discovers sheer happiness; in others, the various simple and complex emotions of elation, wonder, anger, admiration, gratitude, pity, and sorrow. Love of her mother, pity for the poor little Dandelion Man, the joy of spring, the gratitude for kindness, and the wonder in the awakening of the apple seed are typical illustrations that indicate the possession of feeling and the power to express it.

INTRODUCTION

The themes treated are those best suited to the experience of a child. Nature in its visible forms occupies the principal place of interest. Leaves and flowers, trees and streams, woods, fields and pastures, clouds and winds, birds and bees, the moon, sun, and stars,—all of these come in for treatment. The supernatural world with its elves and fairies and witches and angels rivals the physical world in the number of allusions. Abstract ideas are treated in connection with concrete things. Freedom is an ideal, as shown in *Wild Horses* and *If I Had My Way*; gratitude is expressed in the verses called *Boats* and *Mother*, though not mentioned as such. The ocean, the bay, and boats are expected themes for a child who so loves freedom and vast spaces and the grace of movement. There is, of course, little of the purely sentimental; and for the same reason, an absence of themes that are purely ratiocinative in character. These are not only prior to her stage of development, but they also are not such stuff as would delight the heart of a poet.

What the future may hold for this young poet and what this young poet may hold for

INTRODUCTION

the future, no one can say. Bright days are reasonably to be expected if there lies any merit in divining the times to come by those that are gone. But that really is of little moment, after all is said, for Mary Harriss has already won sufficient recompense of the gods by bringing untold happiness to her friends. That is the measure of success. She is one of those rare spirits who pass infrequently through this earth in a film of glory to keep alive man's faith in the dream of Immortality.

W. K. D.

*United States Naval Academy
Annapolis, Maryland
23 August, 1923*

BLUE BEADS AND AMBER

CONTENTS

I. EARTH, MOON, AND STARS

PROPHECY	45
SLEEP	46
DISCOVERY	47
GOLDEN BALLS ON SILVER THREADS	48

II. SONGS FROM A PEAR TREE

THE PEAR TREE	51
SUNSET	52
MOTHER	53
THE BAY	54
RAIN	55
CLOVERS	56
IF I HAD MY WAY	57
THE MOON	58
THE DOLL WITHOUT A NAME . .	59
ELVES	60
BIRDS	61
A PICTURE	62

III. WINGS OF THE WIND

LEAVES	65
THE ORCHARD	66

CONTENTS

PANSIES	67
BUTTERFLIES	68
SPRING	69
I SHALL SOMETIME HAVE A FARM .	70
THE APPLE SEED'S AWAKENING .	71
THE WOODS	
<i>I. The Flowers</i>	72
<i>II. The Brook</i>	73
<i>III. The Trees</i>	74
SPRING FLOWERS	75
THE DANDELION MAN	76
WHERE I WANT TO LIVE	77
BUTTERCUPS	78
SUNRISE	80
MY FARM	
<i>I. The House</i>	81
<i>II. The Field and Pasture</i> . .	82
<i>III. The Woods</i>	83
ON FIRST SEEING THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT	84
BOOTS	85
THE STORM	86
THE OCEAN WAVES	87
BOATS	88
I THINK IT IS A DREADFUL THING .	89
AUTUMN LEAVES	90

CONTENTS

THE FAIRY'S BOAT	91
WILD HORSES	92
AUTUMN	93
MOTHER'S DAY	94
THE MAKING OF OUR CLOTHES .	95
SKY PICTURES	96
THE CLOCK	97

IV. THE SEA AND SKY

THE BLACK CLOUD	101
A STORM	102
THE SUN'S BEDTIME	103
THE FAIRY BANQUET	104
A JUNE MORNING	106
NIGHT ON THE BAY	107
SEAWEED	109
PHOSPHOROUS	110
WHITE CAPS	111
A DROP OF WATER	112
A SHELL	113
JACK RABBIT'S ADVENTURE . .	114
BEES	115
QUESTIONS	116
THE SUN'S HELPERS	117
THE BULB	118
I'VE COUNTED MY BEADS . . .	119

EARTH, MOON, AND STARS
Four Years Old

PROPHECY

*I AM all the smaller I can get,
All the bigger on a bet.*

SLEEP

SITTING on the chair
Swinging my legs so gay:
When I turned around
It was the next day!

DISCOVERY

I 'VE just discovered something
About the earth on which we live:
It's a big round ball
On which we crawl
Or walk, according to ourselves.

GOLDEN BALLS ON SILVER THREADS

MOTHER, dear,
How does God bring out the moon at
night
And hide it away by day?
And what does He do with the stars
When morning light puts them to flight?
Are they like golden balls on silver threads
hung?
Does He just bring them out
For the dark night,
Then draw them up one by one
When daybreak comes?

SONGS FROM A PEAR TREE

Nine Years Old

THE PEAR TREE

THERE is a pear tree in our back yard;
It's big and tall and wide.
It has so many leaves on it,
That's where I like to hide.

Sometimes when it is nice and still,
I take a book up there.
One of the limbs on which I sit
Has a back like an easy chair.

I call to people as they pass
Underneath the tree;
The branches are so thick and leafy
That they can not see me.

SUNSET

T'IS sunset in the country
And all the bleating sheep
Are brought home from the pasture
And soon are fast asleep.

The farmer is shutting the gate
That leads to the garden bowers,
For even the rose is fast asleep,
The Rose, the queen of all flowers.

The bees are in the beehives
All ready for the night;
They have made their honey, poor bees!
Being robbed is no delight.

Cuddled right down in their nest,
Kept warm by their mother bird,
The baby brood has gone to rest
As the hoot of an owl is heard.

The horses in the stable
As quiet as can be;
The streamlet singing softly
Goes on from tree to tree.

MOTHER

THINK first of your mother
Before you act or speak,
For you can not find but one mother
No matter how far you seek.

THE BAY

THE water forever is moving
On the quietest summer day . . .
Ever since the Mischief Fairy
Threw the keys away.

RAIN

THE thing that seems so strange to me
Is that the rain can chatter;
But the strangest thing of all is that
It can only say *pitter-patter*.

CLOVERS

THREE are many purple clovers
Over in the park.
I picked some just last Sunday
As it was growing dark.

I took the clovers home with me
And put them in a vase;
Each looked at me most kindly
With its little purple face.

IF I HAD MY WAY

I WOULD always be swinging on gates:
I'd swing and swing all day,
And I would never go to school
If I had my way.

I'd be playing all the night,
I'd be playing all the day . . .
I'd never stop for work
If I had my way.

Mother said I couldn't eat or sleep,
But I just say *Ho! Hey!*
I would not have to eat or sleep
If I had my way.

THE MOON

LAST night I looked out of my window
And the moon was round and bright;
It seemed like a great ship sailing
On a sea of misty light.

The white clouds are the sea;
The moon is the golden boat
That has no chance of sinking,
But always remains afloat.

THE DOLL WITHOUT A NAME

I'VE a little doll without a name
That stands upon a table;
I sometimes call her Dorothy,
I sometimes call her Mabel.

Once she fell into the mud,
But I liked her all the same.
As soon as she was washed again,
. I then gave her a name. .

ELVES

I LIKE to read of fairies
And of wicked little elves . . .
Of what happens to little girls at night
Who go out by themselves.

I read in a book the other day
Of how the king and queen
Had run away in the midst of war
And escaped without being seen.

But a king should always lead his troops
And never run away;
So the wicked elves got this bad king
On this weary warsome day.

BIRDS

THREE are many birds that come to feed
On the bread that we throw out.
There are robins, pigeons, and blackbirds,
And sparrows and crows all about.

There's one family of little robins
Being taught to fly . . .
I sometimes wish that I also
Could sail away so high.

A PICTURE

WE'VE a picture on our wall
Of mountains and of trees,
Of a lake of graceful ripples
Made by a calm soft breeze.

The sky has the loveliest colours
Of the most delicate blue and pink.
The picture belongs to Mother;
She got it for Christmas, I think.

The high chains of mountains
Are capped with snow
And look quite splendid
From the shores below.

Now this beautiful lake
That I have described,
Surrounded by mountains and trees,
Is far away in Canada.—
It is fair Lake Louise.

WINGS OF THE WIND

Ten Years Old

LEAVES

THE leaves are blowing everywhere,
Dancing and floating,—
A rainbow on the earth . . .
Green leaves, yellow leaves, red leaves . . .
They look like hundreds of tiny birds
Flying about on the wings of the wind.

THE ORCHARD

THE orchard is full of blossoms
Dancing around like the fairies
So wild and free . . . some pink, some
white . . .

Some lie sleeping on the green moss carpet:
Wherever the little breezes go,
There go the apple and cherry blossoms
Riding the wind horses around,
Spreading the earth with their sweet scent,
Filling the world with joy and beauty. . . .

PANSIES

PANSIES' feet are green,
Their eyes are blue;
Their yellow skin is soft as velvet . . .
They look as if they are scolding you.

BUTTERFLIES

GREAT butterflies are sailing all around
Like thoughts floating silently through
the air.

Their brown wings with black dots on them
Are like the sails of the fairy ships
As the wind carries them up, up, up in the
sky.

SPRING

FLOWERS are waking up,
Birds are coming back . . .

They make the world look and sound
Like a coloured music box . . .

Spring is coming, coming!

The brook is happily singing
As the green trees spread their branches o'er it.
The flowers, trees, birds, and the brook
Cry the great secret the wind told to them—
Spring is here! Spring is here! Spring is here!

I SHALL SOMETIME HAVE A FARM

I SHALL sometime have a farm . . .
A little brown cottage . . .
The path leading to it
Lined with violets.
The wall will be of weeping willows—
Their graceful, tearful limbs
Will shade the roses
From the hot sun. . . .

THE APPLE SEED'S AWAKENING

UNDER the ground where it is always
night

And there is no ray of the sun's lovely light,
A seed lies dreaming of when he shall be
A beautiful tall green apple tree.

He, of the seeds, is most anxious of all
To hear the sunbeam's happy call
Of Wake up! Wake up!
Spring is here! Spring is here!

As he lies dreaming, a cry is heard—
A cry to the weeds,
A cry to the seeds . . .

Father Sun has sent his rays
To say that snow no longer stays.
The seed lets his little shoots run
Into the world to greet Father Sun
For his mother . . . The spring is here!

THE WOODS

I. The Flowers

THE woods are full of flowers . . .
They talk to me:
The Arbutus tells me
Where she got her fragrance;
The Violet tells me
Where she got her colour. . . .
All the flowers laugh
And bow to each other.

THE WOODS

II. The Brook

A LITTLE brook runs through the woods
On his happy way to the sea.
He chatters to the sand and pebbles:
He tells them of the things he has seen—
Of the children who have sailed boats in him,
Of the animals who drink his water.

THE WOODS

III. The Trees

THE woods have many kinds of trees.
They spread their branches o'er the
flowers—
They shade the flowers and the brook . . .
Their many green tongues are never still . . .
They sing the baby birds to sleep.

SPRING FLOWERS

FLOWERS all are waking up,—
Daisy, rose, and buttercup,
The yellow, pink, and white,
Make the world look warm and bright.

Spring is coming,
Violets are in bloom;
Spring is coming . . . coming . . .
The birds will come back soon . . .
Spring is coming . . . coming!

THE DANDELION MAN

AS I walked along in the woods by the
brook,
In a place where the bank was low,
I saw a cool shady nook
Where a little man stood
In green from top to toe.
His hair was yellow and very bright—
It stood out around his face like a fan . . .
I knew it was the Dandelion Man.
I came to see him the very next day:
His yellow hair had turned to grey;
With a single puff of the wind he was gone . . .
Poor little Dandelion Man!

WHERE I WANT TO LIVE

GROWN people
Like places
That are part town
And part country;
But I like all country,
Six miles away,
Where there is no school
And where
I can have chickens,
Pigeons, and ponies,
And everything.

BUTTERCUPS

ONCE upon a time there was a King who behaved very haughtily toward his subjects. His horses, dogs, and even his people disliked him.

He drank from a golden cup, which had the power to protect him from his enemies.

One day he went out hunting, into a huge dark forest. In the midst of the forest was a pool of water on which a witch was sitting. The King behaved toward her as to his subjects. She was very angry, and said:

*Hokus! Pokus!
Limbus! Lokus!
Spread the path with trees,
Raise a strong breeze,
The magical cup
And its owner seize;
Then sail up, up, up,
Away to Fairy Land,
My little elves,
Tell the Queen yourselves
Of his rude action to us.*

The elves obeyed, and soon the King was before the Queen of Fairies.

BUTTERCUPS—(*Continued*)

Hokus told the story, and as he spoke the haughty King was turned into a frog and hopped away.

The Queen then touched the magic cup with her wand and it became a yellow flower.

“Does it not look like butter?” said Limbus.

“I shall call it the buttercup,” said the Queen.

Buttercups have been growing in meadows by the hundreds ever since.

SUNRISE

ALL is dark . . . the stars shine brightly . . .
A streak of pink pierces the black of the
sky;

As it widens, the stars seem to fade into
it. . . .

It forms a path for the Sun
When he starts on his journey
Across the sky.

The cock crows, the sparrows chirp,
The robin's song is broken
Only by the crow's harsh *caw*.

The sleepy earth shakes its head and rubs
its eyes.—

All it sees is the bank of white clouds in the
east . . .

They form a snowy mountain in the sky. . . .

The Sun tumbles over the silver cloudy cliffs
In a spray of light

Like a foaming torrent leaping from rock to
rock.

MY FARM

I. The House

I HAVE a farm . . .

A little brown cottage
Enfolded in a blanket of climbing vines . . .
The grassy front yard is bordered with violets,
And a great oak spreads its leafy boughs
To shelter it all from the sun's heat.

MY FARM

II. The Field and Pasture

NEXT to the cottage is a lovely field,
A field of waving hay.
It glistens like gold
In the summer sun.
The air carries the sweet scent
Far and wide over the green pastures
Stretching far behind it,
Where the two goats graze
While their kids play about them,
Running and jumping
And rolling about in the grass.
Their neighbour, the black horse,
Takes dinner with them,
Her colt, like the kids,
Playing around his mother. .

MY FARM

III. The Woods

THERE are woods on my farm
Where the hickory trees grow
And the squirrels in their branches
Hop to and fro,
Happily chattering as they gather the nuts
And store them in their hollow trees.
A cool brook tinkles near by . . .
Why doesn't its tongue get tired?
It is forever chattering and laughing—
It tells me about the things it has seen:
It has seen the fairies dancing,
And has seen the animals raise their families. . . .
But, when I touch the tinkling brook,
It fades into the air beneath my hand—
For my farm is but a lovely dream,
A wonderful castle in the air.

ON FIRST SEEING THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT

A MONUMENTAL shaft of white
Does high above the city rise,
Seen afar by day and night
Towering to the skies.

BOOTS

BOOTS was a kitten of gray
With a shirt front and shoes of white;
He was far too dignified to play,
But just loved to fight.

Once Boots ran away
And couldn't be found for a night and a day.
When he came home, his coat of grey
Was covered with soot and dirty clay.

So we will say good-bye to this naughty cat
Who ran away a night and a day,
Who steals and does such things as that,
This naughty, naughty kitty cat.

THE STORM

KING Neptune was churning the sea—
His white horses were prancing . . .
The Sea King was angry . . .
The waves were dancing
As dark cloud ships floated in the sky.

THE OCEAN WAVES

THE ocean waves come rolling in . . .

They mumble and rumble.

Perhaps like witches

They are mumbling charms.

You can see through their green skin

As the army of witches charges and retreats.

Each one's long flowing white hair

Is blown all about by the strong winds;

Their wicked eyes gleam

As they rush into battle.

When they hit me, they knock me down;

When I slap them, they splash in my face. . . .

BOATS

Written in acknowledgment of a toy launch

MY little boats are sailing,
Little boats called thoughts;
Sailing to one who sent to me
One of my pretty boats.

I THINK IT IS A DREADFUL THING

I THINK it is a dreadful thing
That mothers die
And leave their children
When they need them so . . .
I do not mind
If you go away
And stay
In a place where I can come to you . . .
But please,
Mother,
Do not leave me
And never come back.

AUTUMN LEAVES

THE autumn leaves are dancing—
They are light as the fairies
Dressed in their new dresses,
All red and yellow and orange,
That Autumn gave to them.

THE FAIRY'S BOAT

BY a pond
A red rose grew,
A petal fell off
When the wind blew.

To a lily
It did float,
Looking like
A little boat.

Out of the lily
A fairy stepped,
Into the crimson
Boat she leapt;

They sailed around,
Around, around
Until the petal
Was old and brown.

Then the wind blew
The petal up,
And the fairy flew back
To her lily cup.

WILD HORSES

WILD horses are roaming
Over the Western prairies . . .
Their leader prances ahead,
His sleek sides shining,
His tail trailing the ground.
He does not want to be caught,
To have a saddle on his back,
Or a cart behind him.
He likes to run wild and free
Over the prairies with a band of his kind.
He wants to be his own master,
To go and come
Whenever he wishes.

AUTUMN

O CTOBER'S walking over
 Her carpet of gold
With her friend, Jack Frost,
Whose breath is so cold.
Little clouds are playing
About the blue sky
As the blustering winds
Hurry by . . .
Calling so loud
That each cloud
Sheds a tear . . .
Autumn is here!
Autumn is here!

MOTHER'S DAY

SHE is treasured more than gold,
She is kind and very wise;
I am glad I have a mother
With brown hair and hazel eyes.

I never can be too grateful
For what she has done for me;
There was never a person nicer
In any way than she.

THE MAKING OF OUR CLOTHES

THE spinning wheel is going around
With a busy *hum—hum—hum!*
Making thread for you and me
And for every one.
The shuttle is working busily,
Humming like a bee,
Weaving cloth to make the clothes
Worn by you and me.
Mother's hands work quickly,
As in and out the needle goes,
Sewing the cloth together,
Making us our clothes.

SKY PICTURES

THE clouds are like angel's wings,
 Soft and feathery . . .
The trees look like black lace
Outlined against the sky:
Back of them
With wings outspread
Is an angel about to fly.

THE CLOCK

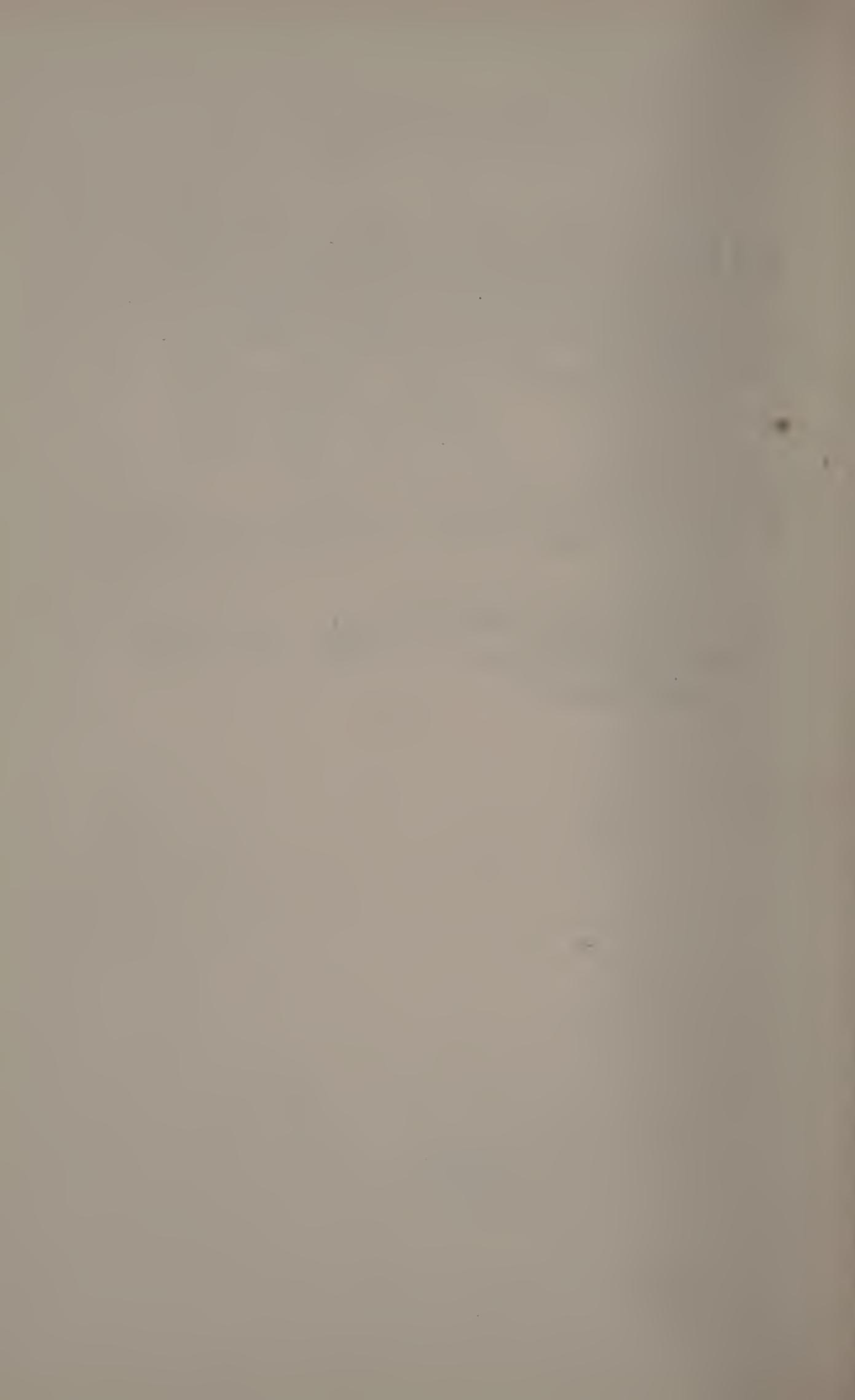
I.

WHAT a wonderful thing is the clock,
Always saying: “Tick, tick, tock . . .
You better go to bed, it’s nine o’clock . . .
Tick-tock, tick, tick, tock.”

II.

What a strange thing is the clock;
It doesn’t wash its face, and yet is never
dirty.

How does *it* know when to say,
“You had better go to school, it’s almost
eight-thirty”?



THE SEA AND SKY

Eleven Years Old

THE BLACK CLOUD

THIS morning
I saw a great black cloud
In the eastern sky . . .
With a wreath of yellow sunshine round it
Like the wings of a black butterfly
In a garden of daffodils.

A STORM

I.

THE sun is blotted
By a great black cloud;
A peal of thunder
Rolls over the sky
Like a giant cart wheel
Falling down stairs;
The terrifying sound
Makes all the world tremble.

II.

The lightning flashes
In one long thin line of light. . . .

III.

Like many little soldiers
With tiny pattering feet
The rain beats down
Upon the brick-paved street.

IV.

The sun is shining brightly,
The thunder has ceased to roar:
The lightning has quit flashing;
Now the storm is o'er.

THE SUN'S BEDTIME

THE sky is pink with the glow of the sun
As he goes to his bed in the west;
He has worked so hard all day long
He surely has earned his rest.

Perhaps he sleeps in the heart of a rose
Which unfolds its petals in the sky;
And in creeps the sun at the end of the day
And soon is asleep in his bed so high.

THE FAIRY BANQUET

UP came the moon,
Down went the sun,
Out peeped the twinkling stars
One by one.

They kept their watch
O'er the meadow fair—
Trees and buttercups
Were blooming there.

Each shining buttercup opened wide,
And out of each a fairy stepped.—
You see, these little buttercups
Were where the fairies slept.

One had long golden curls;
Her tiny slippers were white and clean;
Her gauzy wings were long and pink;—
She was the Fairy Queen.

All night they danced and sang and ate
To the light of the fireflies in the meadow and
sky,
Twinkling and flashing and flying about,
While the stars kept their silent watch on
high.

THE FAIRY BANQUET—(*Continued*)

The moon and stars began to disappear;
The sky turned light and the sun came
up . . .

With shouts and cries each fairy flew
Back to her buttercup.

A JUNE MORNING

THE robins sing,
The sparrows chirp,
Trees are nodding
In the summer breeze.
The clouds overhead
Are snowy white,
Like feathers floating
In the sky.
Roses fill the air
With their scent;
The world hums with happiness . . .
'Tis a morning in June.

NIGHT ON THE BAY

IT was night.

The clouds in the east were purple,
The moon was rising . . .
It went behind a cloud,
Where it shone,
Giving the world a reddish tint.
The water lapped on the shore
With a soft rippling sound.
The moon burst forth . . .
It made a pathway across the water
Of its glorious light.
The mass of clouds began to separate
And take shape . . .
They became men, birds, animals, and reptiles,
Jumping, running, flying, creeping.—
They all went down the watery path.
A game then began—
Everybody moved according to his own fashion.

NIGHT ON THE BAY—(*Continued*)

Suddenly a black hand
Descended out of Heaven;
It closed over the purple figures:
Then the moon, clouds, and water
Were swallowed up in the darkness . . .
A grey mist appeared in the east—
It was dawn!
Night was over.

SEAWEED

WHERE does seaweed come from?
Who planted the grass of the ocean?
Perhaps some lovely mermaid
Has a garden on the bottom,
And the strong and restless waves
Washed the long, flat, green grass,—
Washed it to the shore,
Where the children of the land
Laugh and play with it
As did the daughter of the ocean
Who first planted all the seaweed. . . .
Do the children of the waters
Long for their strange green toys?
Do they cry when it is washed upon the
shore?

PHOSPHOROUS

THE sun slowly sank in the west,
The moon took her silent watch in the
heavens
And poured her light upon the sparkling
water.
As I plunged my hand into the salty waves,
I felt something soft between my fingers:
It was a jellyfish!
As I touched it, it shone abroad
With a soft green light like a candle's.
There are many of them shining far and near.
Are they the water fairies' lanterns?
When lifted from the water,
They are jelly-like and shapeless;
But when dropped into the ocean,
They look like many tiny hairs.
Paddling and waving they wriggle through
the water—
The tiny fireflies of the sea.

WHITE CAPS

GIANT waves and baby waves
Roll in and break on the sand,
Sending up a cloud of milky spray.
Never resting,
Never hurrying,
They play together.
Far away I can still see them,
All coming closer and closer to me.
Each wave, large or small,
Wears a white cap.
All the ocean is covered
With tiny white dots.—
They are all snowy foaming caps.

A DROP OF WATER

A GIANT wave
Broke on the sand,
A drop of its spray
Fell on my hand.

I watched the little drop of water
Take off his foaming cloak;
Then sitting down upon my hand,
He turned to me and spoke.

He said: "I come from far-off lands;
I've floated in a cloud on high;
I almost touched a star one night,
Playing in the sky."

A SHELL

WHAT is stranger than a shell—
A shell that always seems to be
Whispering and telling me
The secrets of the sea?

What is lovelier than a shell?
From pink to blue and then to brown
The colours change like mother-of-pearl
As in the sun I turn the shell around.

JACK RABBIT'S ADVENTURE

TWAS a warm and sunny morning . . .
The green marsh reeds were waving,
Whispering to each other.
Then they were softly thrust aside . . .
A small brown face looked out between them.
There was a dry scaly rustling—
A dark striped head appeared.
The great brown eyes looked frightened . . .
The little face was gone!
There was a tiny white spot
Bobbing in the distance;
The body of a snake followed the dark head,—
A water moccasin wriggled through the
grass. . . .
On and on went rabbit and snake;
Nearer and nearer the water snake came to
Jack.
With a long hiss, the reptile struck—and
missed!
One instant later, and Jack was safe in his
nest.

BEES

THREE are many flowers in the woods,
And over each flies a bee.
They hang in the air on fairy wings
And sing buzzing songs to me.
All year they work to make honey and comb,
And make bees' bread to keep them alive;
At the end of a year, after all their labour,
Men come and rob the hive.

QUESTIONS

WHERE was I before I was born?
Where will I be after I die?
Who made the maker of you and I?
What is gravity that holds me down?
Why can't I leap into space and fly?

These questions no man can answer,
For who saw the Creator made?
Who has seen the beginning of gravity?
And who has come back after being dead?

THE SUN'S HELPERS

I FOUND a clearing in the woods—
There were trees on all sides . . .
Their branches met over my head,
And kept out the sunbeams:
But it was not dark—
It was lighted by yellow butterflies.
Perhaps the sun sent them on earth
To light the places his rays could not reach.

THE BULB

I FOUND a brown ball, ugly and rough;
Slowly I turned it round and round. . . .

“Give me stones to steady my roots,
Give me water to drink,
And you shall see growing
A lovely flower whose fragrance fills your
home—
A flower whose beauty penetrates all darkness
As the sun shines through a break in the
clouds.”

I'VE COUNTED MY BEADS

I'VE counted my beads one by one:
In this book they are strung . . .
According to colour and kind they stand;
But now I come to the end of my strand
Of Blue Beads and Amber.

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